

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Contents

TickerTape:

Enjoy historic moments at the Middlesex Yeomanry Band autumn concert
The Tree Agency

Local Picture Postcard Column - Hoggers Corner – Mortlake

Alan Winter

Crusader Travel

Next week at Richmond Council

Give back to nature and discover the history of Ham Lands this World Habitats Day

Richmond Council

Tribute paid to former Leader of Richmond Council

Outrage in Kew as Pensford Field Environmental Volunteers Evicted

Letters

Nominations are open for The Earthshot Prize 2025

The Earthshot Prize

Megan's to host a charity breakfast on Tuesday 8th October

Megan's

Full Council Meeting

James Knight

Book your winter vaccines to protect yourself and your loved ones

NHS

Richmond Council Faces Tough Questions at the Community Conversation

Twickers Foodie - Delightful Delhi Social

Alison Jee

Twickers Foodie - Local Business Profile: Chimmy's

Alison Jee

Sunborn, Gibraltar

They Come in friendship

Bruce Lyons

October means...

Deep Patel

Mark Aspen Review: Blithe Spirit

Polly Davies

Mark Aspen Review: Flare Path

Heather Moulson

Mark Aspen Review: Suor Angelica

Susan Furnell

Mark Aspen Review: Faith, Hope, Love

Mark Aspen

Local author inspired by Orleans House & Sheen Priory, new novel praised by Stephen Fry

Adam Howorth

Calling all local artists to take part in Orleans House Gallery's winter show

Orleans House Gallery

Explore arts and literature at Richmond Reads this autumn

Richmond Libraries

Live Music

The Eel Pie Pub

St Mary's Awarded £300k Grant to Develop Apprenticeships

St Mary's University

World champion Soh Wai Ching has 'unfinished business' as he takes on second RNLI Tower Run

RNLI

Red Roses Team To Play New Zealand

RFU

Borthwick names 36-player squad for three-day training camp

RFU

Match Preview: Brentford v Wolves

Brentford FC

England's Top 10 Council Tax Hotspots Revealed

Tax Advisor

Editors:

Berkley Driscoll

Teresa Read

TickerTape - News in Brief

Enjoy historic moments at the Middlesex Yeomanry Band autumn concert

On Sunday 13 October, the Middlesex Yeomanry Concert Band is holding an autumn concert at St James's Church in support of Shooting Star Children's Hospices and space2grieve.

The concert will feature a variety of music, including the march Arromanches as this is the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, the rousing overture Plymouth Hoe, Elton John's elegiac ballad Candle in the Wind in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, the Spitfire Prelude and more.

The bandmaster, Mike Robinson, is stepping down after 34 years at the helm of the Middlesex Yeomanry Concert Band. This concert is therefore a very special occasion. Come along to enjoy a selection of music and bid a warm farewell to Mike!

Event details:

- **Date:** Sunday 13 October 2024
- **Time:** 3pm
- **Location:** St. James's Church, St. James's Road, TW12 1DQ
- **Price:** Tickets are £15 on the door or £12.50 in advance

Guests can enjoy refreshments and will receive a concert programme.

For more information, please contact the organisers at judy.morrison1@btinternet.com or 07854 022426.



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

The Treehouse
 25 King Edwards Grove
 Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9LY
 Telephone 020 8274 0107
 Mobile 07960 123580
 Fax 020 8274 0119
info@thetreeagency.co.uk
www.thetreeagency.co.uk



The Tree Agency

Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 269

Hoggers Corner – Mortlake

By Alan Winter

I recently acquired a couple of postcards of Hoggers corner in Mortlake. Having never heard of it before I did a bit of research which ended up telling the life story of one Samuel Peter Hogger who was born in 1858 and died in 1936 aged 77.

His birth certificate states that he was born on December 21st 1858 at 12, Bird Street in Lambeth, Surrey. His father, working as a shoemaker, was the informant and the birth was registered on January 27th 1859.

The 1881 Census finds him at age “22” lodging at Sarre House in Barnes, Surrey in the household of a blind plasterer John Crothall. He was working as a wheelwright.

In 1882 he married Sarah (nee) Cousens on October 31st 1882; he was working as a wheelwright and cited his place of residence as Barnes. In 1883 he was still in Barnes when his child William Samuel was born.

Local directories show that in 1886 he was living variously at 1, Eleanor Terrace and at Railway Side, both off White Hart Lane near the border of Mortlake with Barnes; when at Railway Side he was apparently working in partnership with someone named Adams; in the period 1887-91 he was living at 1, Priest’s Bridge in Mortlake. Priest’s Bridge consisted then of an obtuse-angled corner in Upper Richmond Road.

The 1891 Census finds him at living at 1, Priest’s Bridge with his wife and son; boarding with them was his brother James.

The 1901 Census finds the family living at Nos. 1 and 2, Priest’s Bridge where he was occupied as a coach builder and wheelwright. By this time his cousin Jesse - also a wheelwright - was likewise living in Mortlake and was possibly working with him.

The local street, residential and commercial directories show that he remained in the vicinity of Priest’s Bridge until at least 1934.

His occupation was cited repeatedly as wheelwright until 1919. In the meantime, however, he had also been occupied with a motor works - possibly in his ownership - since at least as far back as 1913. During the period 1913-1918 he also ran a farrier’s business.

Our first photograph (sorry about the poor condition) from the 1920s or earlier, depicts a business premises - probably at Nos. 1 and 2 Priest’s Bridge





- named "S.Hogger Coachbuilder", and a street sign appearing to say "Hogger's Corner".

The other two images are both postcards titled "Hogger's Corner, Barnes" and are probably also from the 1920's. From these it appears that a new stretch of road had been built so as to bypass the Priest's Bridge corner thereby straightening-out the western section of Upper Richmond Road.

The Market Gardeners pub which you can see in one of the postcards was situated at Priests Bridge, Upper Richmond Road virtually next door to Samuel Hoggers' business. This pub closed in the 1990s, and is now in residential use. If anyone can come up with a good postcard showing this pub I can feature it in a future column.

So there we have it. A snapshot of a full and busy life and business in Mortlake. The postcards show us the site of the coach building and motor-works business of Samuel Peter Hogger. It operated for half a century, from the early 1880s up to the early 1930s. Maybe, were it not for a few postcards published about 100 years ago all this may have been forgotten.



The West London Postcards Fair takes place next Saturday at the Baptist Church in Church Road, Teddington. My tables by the stage have large quantities of postcards and photographs of our Borough going back 130 years or so. Light refreshments served all day. 10.00 - 4.00. Come along and have a browse.

My search for old postcards continues. I am always looking for old postcards and old photograph albums etc. The postcards can be British or Foreign, black and white or coloured and of places or subjects. If you have any that are sitting unwanted in a drawer, in a box in the loft or in the garage or under a bed, please contact me on 07875 578398 or alanwinter192@hotmail.com I would like to see them and I pay cash!

WEST LONDON POSTCARD FAIR

Including STAMPS, POSTAL HISTORY, COINS and
EPHEMERA

TEDDINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH
CHURCH ROAD, TW11 8PF

SATURDAY 12th
OCTOBER

10am - 4pm Admission £2.00

14 DEALERS REFRESHMENTS

EASY BY RAIL - Teddington (on Kingston loop from Waterloo) -
EASY BY BUS - 33, 281, 285, 481, R68 and SL7
EASY BY ROAD - From M3/A316

Enquiries: **ALAN WINTER**
07875 578398 / alanwinter192@hotmail.com

CrusaderTravel

020 8744 0474

crusadertravel.com

Escapology Experts

info@crusadertravel.com



Your friendly local Travel Agency
established in Twickenham since 1966

With over 50 years experience we pride ourselves on being able to offer an unrivalled service with attention to detail. Come and have a chat with us in our cosy office off the Church Street Square, we are open 6 days a week from 11am until 6pm (Closed Sunday)



Next week at Richmond Council

On Tuesday, the **Regulatory Committee** will meet to approve the new gambling policy, the cumulative impact policy restricting new licenced venues in Twickenham and Richmond town centres, and the Rosslyn Road public space protection order. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. at York House, Twickenham.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

On Thursday, the Health and Wellbeing Board will meet to be presented with the safeguarding adults board annual report, the new pharmacy application process, the Start Well report relating to children's mental health, the Better Care Fund date, and the Richmond Health Protection annual report. The meeting will start at 2p.m. at York House, Twickenham.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

How to participate: we encourage all members of the public who live or work in the borough to engage. You can submit questions or speak on an item in the agenda. To ask a question, simply submit your question by 12 noon, two working days in advance. To speak, you must register by noon the working day before the meeting.

For further details on how to participate, please follow the link [HERE](#)

Give back to nature and discover the history of Ham Lands this World Habitats Day

From Richmond Council

From Monday 7 to Saturday 12 October, our Parks team is partnering with Friends of Ham Lands and Habitats & Heritage to run a week of community litter picks and a free nature talk.

There is no better way to mark World Habitats Day than by participating in litter picking and giving back to nature. The week-long clean-up event will feature two litter picking sessions per day. Litter pickers and bags will be provided, but please bring your own gloves. Refreshments will be served at the end of the session as a thank you for your hard work. If you can spare two hours to give our community a clean, please sign up and come along with your family and friends!

- Date: Monday 7 to Saturday 12 October 2024
- Time: 10am to 12pm / 2 to 4pm
- Location: Ham Lands Local Nature Reserve, Riverside Drive, Richmond, TW10 7QA
- [Register now](#)

In addition to the clean-up, residents are invited to a free talk to discover the natural history of Ham Lands and explore the connection between wellbeing and nature.

- Date: Monday 7 October 2024
- Time: 6.30 to 7.30pm
- Location: St Richards Church Ashburnham Road, TW10 7NL
- RSVP is not required, all are welcome to attend



Tribute paid to former Leader of Richmond Council

Richmond Councillors paid tribute to former Leader Serge Lourie last night, praising his stalwart public service, charity work and kindness.

Serge served as Leader of Richmond Council from 2001 to 2002 and 2006 to 2010 and was a Kew Ward Councillor for nearly three decades, from 1982 to 2010. A member of the Liberal Democrats, he is remembered for his passion for public service and deep commitment to his local community.

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Leader of Richmond Council said: *“Serge’s work as Council Leader was in many ways visionary.*

“He did such an enormous amount and he tried to make lives better, whether it was people in Kew where he served with distinction or people within the borough as a whole. He will be missed.”

Serge was also a long-time trustee Richmond Charities, where he chaired the Finance Committee, and deeply involved supporting Almshouse residents. He was equally committed healthcare, serving as Chair of the Friends of Kingston Hospital.



An enthusiastic marathon runner, he combined his love for fitness with community outreach, leading guided walks around Richmond and recently organising a Couch to 5K group to encourage inactive residents to get active.

A devoted family man, Serge lived in Kew with his wife Julia and was the proud father. His family has asked for [donations in his memory](#) to Kingston Hospital or The Avenue Club in Kew, two causes close to his heart.

He will be remembered fondly by the many residents who joined him on his walks and by the wider Richmond community for his decades of service.

Councillors observed a one-minute silence in Serge’s memory.

Outrage in Kew as Pensford Field Environmental Volunteers Evicted

A storm of controversy has erupted after Richmond Council decided to evict long-standing environmental volunteers from their much-loved green space to make way for a mental health charity. The decision has triggered a fierce backlash from local residents, many of whom feel their efforts to preserve the area's natural beauty have been disregarded in favour of a paid service provider.

Cllr Roberts defended the council's stance, stressing the need to retain *Dose of Nature*—a charity providing vital mental health support—within the borough. “We were facing the very real possibility of losing this valuable service provider,” said Cllr Roberts. “A *Dose of Nature* supports over 300 adults and 100 young people in our community, many of whom rely on the therapeutic services they offer. After an exhaustive search, this lease was the only viable solution.”

However, his explanation has yet to placate local environmental volunteers, who feel their hard work has been disregarded. “How can you take the lease from hardworking unpaid volunteers who've won Green Flag awards for this field and give it to a paid service provider?” demanded a visibly upset Mrs Hutchings, a local resident, during a heated public question session. “This is our field, and we've spent hundreds of hours caring for it.”

While Cllr Roberts apologised for the way the decision was handled, admitting that “we should have done better” with community consultation, he remained firm on the outcome. “In hindsight, a more thorough consultation would have been the right step, but ultimately, the outcome would not have changed,” he conceded. He sought to reassure residents that public access to the field would remain intact under the new lease, adding, “All current rights will be protected. The field will remain open to the public, and no ecological harm will be done.”

Yet, such assurances failed to convince many in the community. Mrs Sarah Atkins, another passionate resident, challenged the council's understanding of Pensford Field's unique role. “The field is special because it is reserved primarily for wildlife, with limited human access,” she argued. “Can the council name any other sites in the borough where dogs are excluded and human access is restricted in the same way?”

Further concerns were raised over whether schools and nurseries, which currently enjoy reserved time on the field, would still have the same access under the new arrangement. Cllr Roberts responded by claiming that A *Dose of Nature* had given verbal assurances that existing rights would be maintained and that these would be “baked into the contract” once the lease is fully drafted.

But the controversy is far from settled. One resident bluntly asked whether the council would reconsider the decision, adding, “Is the council aware that the only way to rebuild trust with the community is to reverse this decision and conduct a proper consultation process?”

Cllr Roberts, however, remained resolute. “I don't believe that's the only way forward,” he replied. “We must balance the need for mental health services with the preservation of community spaces.”

The emotional response from residents underscored the depth of feeling in the community. “I'm sad to say I find the council's behaviour appalling,” said another resident, voicing the widespread frustration that many locals feel their years of effort preserving Pensford Field are being brushed aside in the face of bureaucratic decisions.

As tensions simmer, it is clear that this is far from the end of the story. The future of Pensford Field, and the balance between mental health services and environmental preservation, remains a deeply contentious issue in Richmond.

Dear Tribune,

Nice Work If You Can Get It!

Last week I wrote of my having declined a gift (for which read 'tip') from a passenger when I was flying.

It would be nice to think that some of our illustrious leaders have followed my example because, since then, it has been reported that Sir Keir Starmer, Angela Rayner and Rachel Reeves will not accept gifts of clothing in future, some having been declared as *generic office support* !

Apparently, Mr Starmer has also received donations equivalent to £2,485 to fund his multiple pairs of spectacles.

Of course, we would all like a prime minister who can see what he's doing but one can see just as well with a £20 pair of glasses from the high street.

Apparently these gifts total over £100,000.

One wonders whether they would have continued accepting them if they had not been found out in the same way that the MPs' expenses scandal was exposed a few years ago.

One way to check what your MP has actually declared is the Parliamentary Register of Members' Financial Interests:

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmregmem/contents2425.htm>

Of course, the acceptance of gifts does not automatically place the recipient under obligation to the donor but even the possibility, however unlikely, of such an obligation compromises the integrity of both sides.

We have two members of Parliament, for Richmond Park and for Twickenham. Both have officially registered donations to their political parties. That's fair enough because donors can do whatever they like with their money and such donations are not made to individuals.

However, as with many other MPs, the register shows several declarations, also above board, for hospitality, including tickets to the Olivier Awards, The National Theatre, and the Royal Box at Wembley Stadium. None of these come cheap to those who have to pay for themselves.

Obviously these gifts were accepted under the present rules but one has to wonder what possible benefits they could be to their constituents.

Perhaps those constituents would like to ask them?

Michael Jay
Hampton

Dear Editor,

Climate crisis driving working animals and communities to collapse

At next month's UN Climate Change Conference COP29, world leaders will assemble to discuss how to tackle the climate crisis.

At SPANA (the Society for the Protection of Animals Abroad), our goal is for the world of working animals to thrive and grow sustainably as part of the nexus between animals, people and the environment. People have historically exploited animals and the environment, while failing to appreciate the critical interdependency between them. Sadly, the climate crisis is a result of that exploitation.

In the past year, countries where SPANA works – including Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zimbabwe – have experienced devastating climate-related events such as severe flooding, deadly landslides and prolonged droughts. It's clear that the climate crisis is having a catastrophic impact across the world and making life more difficult than ever for working animals and their owners.

The climate crisis is a fundamental threat to the health of animals, people and the environment. When disasters strike, it's usually the most vulnerable in society who are most severely affected – including those in low-income countries where SPANA works.

Extreme events are increasing in frequency, intensity and scale. That's why SPANA ensures that those at risk are prepared – and that we are ready to act when needed. We provide on the ground support, emergency feed and lifesaving veterinary treatment to working animals in need.

The threat posed by climate change to working animal welfare is only going to grow if we don't act now. With over 200 million working animals worldwide, SPANA's work is essential in protecting these vital animals – the trucks, tractors, and taxis of rural communities. Safeguarding and treating these animals isn't just compassion – it's essential to avoiding ecological and economic disaster.

That's why SPANA is calling on world leaders to consider the protection and care of working animals in their COP29 discussions. These animals are vital to sustainability, and their welfare must be part of the global climate agenda.

On World Animal Day (4 October 2024), please find out how you can show your support for working animals affected by the climate crisis by visiting: www.spana.org

Linda Edwards
Chief Executive, SPANA

Dear Editors,

Council 'Mishaps'

I was interested to read that Richmond Council's Community Conversation Event was poorly attended last week owing to the wrong day being advertised.

My road had a similar "mishap". We were told by letter that our road would be shut on 2nd /3rd September for resurfacing and were requested to remove all vehicles by that date. A few days later signs appeared on our lamp posts with the dates of 3rd /4th September for closure. Then cones were placed along the street on either side also bearing the dates 3rd/4th. Everyone made arrangements to have the road cleared by the end of the 2nd, offering use of drives or finding parking places elsewhere in the CPZ.

Come the morning of the 2nd people leaving for work were bemused to find all the heavy road machinery moving into the road but unable to proceed because of some cars still parked there. Later in the morning we had a brief letter pushed through our letterboxes from the Council to inform us that because of the mix up of dates by them the work had been cancelled. Not a single word of apology. As yet we have no idea if or when this work will be rescheduled.

I wonder how much these careless and avoidable mistakes are costing local Council Tax payers.

Kind regards,
Sue Hamilton-Miller
Twickenham

Nominations are open for The Earthshot Prize 2025

Nominations opened on 1st October and close 11th December 2024.

The Earthshot Prize looks for organisations aiming to repair and regenerate the planet.

Official Nominators are selected for their ability to identify solutions for the five Earthshots:

Protect and Restore Nature, Clean our Air, Revive our Oceans, Build a Waste-Free World, Fix our Climate

THE
EARTHSHOT
PRIZE

Official Earthshot Prize website: <https://earthshotprize.org/>

Megan's to host a charity breakfast on Tuesday 8th October

Megan's to host a charity breakfast on Tuesday 8th October, where ALL food & drink sales from 8.30am – 12pm will be donated to their partner charity, Shooting Star Children's Hospices.

Megan's are proud to announce that they will be hosting a charity breakfast on Tuesday 8th October, which will see **all food & drink sales** from 8.30am to 12pm go to their new partner charity, Shooting Star Children's Hospices. Reserve your spot at the charity breakfast [here](#).



[Shooting Star Children's Hospices](#) are a highly-respected charity, dedicated to providing vital care & support to families from diagnosis to end of life & bereavement. The charity provides services for families across Surrey, south west London, & north west London, making the partnership with Megan's a natural fit with most of their locations within these areas.



Their collaboration with Shooting Star Children's Hospices, paired with their ongoing local site-level charitable support, reflects Megan's deep commitment to making a difference in their communities as they aim to become your favourite neighbourhood spot.



The collection of restaurants has surpassed £120,000 in charitable donations, with 10% of water sales going to Shooting Star, & 10% donated at site levels, with further initiatives throughout the year. Other charities they have supported include [Battersea Dogs & Cats home](#), [Off the Record](#) in Twickenham, [Albrighton Community Fridge](#) food bank in East Dulwich, [Willow Foundation](#) in Welwyn Garden City & [XLP Youth Charity](#) in Islington, amongst others.

If you are local to a Megan's & have a charity or cause that's close to your heart, please do reach out to Megan's on community@megans.co.uk to see how they're able to support.

megan's

Full Council Meeting

By James Knight

Twickenham, October 2, 2024

The latest London Borough of Richmond full council meeting was a blend of heated questions, poignant tributes and debate.

Public Questions were the most heated they had been for years, with the future of Pensford Field causing sparks to fly. The council's decision to transfer the lease from the Pensford Field Environment Trust, which has managed the area for years, to the mental health charity A Dose of Nature, sparking a public backlash.

Another major issue raised by residents was cycling safety. A question focused on a reported increase in cycling accidents, with a local resident citing a 130% rise in serious cycle collisions. "We've reviewed the data, and the correct figure is significantly lower," Cllr Alexander Ehmann responded, promising further transparency on cycling safety in the borough.

David Marlow asked why the council held back information on the increased costs for Twickenham Riverside development, but as he was not in attendance, he will receive a written reply.

Despite Cllr Gareth Roberts' reassurances, many residents left the meeting feeling that their concerns had not been fully addressed. "We just want to make sure our voices are heard," said Ms. Atkins. "This isn't just about a piece of land—it's about our community and the values we hold dear."

A Tribute to Serge Lowry: 'A Visionary Leader Ahead of His Time'

There was then a solemn yet warm tribute to Serge Lowry, the former Council leader remembered for his foresight and commitment to public service. Colleagues from all sides paid their respects, recalling Lowry's groundbreaking policies, which were once considered controversial but are now seen as progressive.

"He was ahead of his time, particularly with his advocacy for parking charges on high-emission vehicles," said Cllr Roberts. "At the time, he faced backlash, but now we see that Serge was setting a trend that many have followed."

Cllr Roberts highlighted Lowry's work addressing sustainability: "Serge was always forward-thinking. He was one of the first to talk about sustainability in local governance, long before it became a mainstream concern."

Lowry was also remembered for his efforts to secure fair pay for local councillors and his work on difficult projects, such as the ongoing Twickenham Riverside redevelopment. Cllr Nicholson shared a fond memory of Lowry's humor: "He was always ready with a joke, even in serious situations."

Cllr Michael Wilson said that at his wedding to Munira Wilson, “he encouraged all the guests to deliver and canvass in the Barnes by-election after the ceremony”, to laughter in the council chamber.

As the council stood for a minute of silence to honour Lowry’s memory, they shared a sense of loss but also gratitude for his many contributions to the borough.

Member questions were taken: In a council meeting that was far from routine, a clearly rattled Cllr Roberts tied to provide further reassurances regarding the transfer of Pensford Field to the mental health charity A Dose of Nature.

Responding to questions from an annoyed Cllr Clare Vollum, one of the ward councillors for Kew. Cllr Roberts read aloud an official statement: “The council can assure local residents that when the lease is transferred, the field will remain accessible to local communities, schools, nurseries, and organisations who currently benefit.”

This statement came after widespread concerns that the lease might restrict public access to this much-loved green space. Cllr Roberts went on to emphasise that the new management plan would ensure “the protection, security, and maintenance of the land and natural environment” under council oversight. He concluded, “I hope residents can take some consolation in knowing that this is our intention.”

However, questions remain. Cllr Vollum asked a supplementary question regarding how the council would address ongoing issues and miscommunications: “How will the council ensure that residents feel heard, and their issues addressed?” Cllr Roberts was quick to offer his office as a point of contact: “I’m happy to try to facilitate dialogue and our officers will continue to liaise with the Trust and A Dose of Nature,” he said, expressing hope that any concerns would be resolved without significant changes to the field’s accessibility.

Cllr Frieze said “It’s not often we hear a mea culpa from your good self and thank you for that” in reply to Cllr Roberts admission that he had made a mistake over the handling of the issue. Cllr Roberts later replied, “The reason there’s not often a mea culpa is that I’m not often wrong. Well, that’s the second time this evening. I can only repeat the assurances which I’ve given at length many times, and in writing to members of the trust.”

Affordable Housing Policy Under Scrutiny:

Another highlight of the meeting was a spirited question on the borough’s affordable housing strategy; with Richmond building the fewest affordable houses in London, this is one of the Liberal Democrats’ weak points the Greens are keen to push. Cllr Julia Neden-**Watts chair of the Environment Committee** responded to Cllr Niki Crookdake’s concerns over delays in the local plan process. “The inspectors were very respectful of the council’s ambition to deliver affordable housing,”

Cllr Neden-Watts explained, but added that there were concerns about “disapplying the London Plan fast-track route.” In a somewhat uncertain timeline, the Cllr stated that consultations on the modified affordable housing policy would begin later this year, with adoption hoped for by spring 2025. However, she cautioned that the process would depend on consultation outcomes.

Cllr Crookdake pressed further, asking when new viability guidance would be ready for consultation. “I don’t have a precise date for that,” admitted Cllr Julia Neden-Watts promising to follow up with further details after the meeting.

Gypsy Encampments Eviction Costs Revealed:

The costs and consequences of unauthorised traveller encampments were also a hot topic. Cllr Robin Brown disclosed that the recent encampments at Ham Common and King George’s Field had cost the council over £81,000 in legal services, bailiffs, and clean-up operations. “This represented one of the largest encampments in recent memory,” he said, thanking officers for their efforts to secure eviction orders swiftly. Cllr Richards raised the question of future prevention measures, to which Cllr Brown responded that the council is in the “final stages of gathering evidence” to seek a three-year court injunction to protect key sites. He added that the injunction would significantly speed up the process of evicting unauthorised encampments.

A316 Junction Improvements:

During the council meeting, the discussion turned to Turing House School and the long-awaited improvements to pedestrian and cycling safety at the Hospital Road junction of the A316 in Whitton. This was deemed vital to avoid an unacceptable impact on local traffic by the council planning officers when they permitted Teddington’s school to be built in Whitton. Cllr Wilson expressed frustration that the promised improvements had yet to materialise two years after Turing House opened. “The money is there,” he reminded the council, urging swift action to enhance safety for the school’s students. Cllr Ehmann agreed, acknowledging that the A316 required “dramatic interventions” and pledged to press Transport for London (TfL) for urgent progress. “I will press TfL with the utmost vigour,” he assured the meeting.

VAT on School Fees:

Cllr Frost answered a question about the potential impact of adding VAT to private school fees, a move that could affect many families in the borough, where independent school attendance is much higher than average. She explained that while the full implications are still unclear, the council is preparing for an increase in applications to state schools. “We have capacity in our primary schools,” Cllr Frost noted, though secondary schools might face tighter availability. Regarding concerns about how VAT would affect children with special educational needs and bursaries for lower-income Cllr Frost expressed hope that private schools would absorb the costs where possible and protect bursaries for disadvantaged students.

Debates

The council then discussed three motions on e-bikes, the winter fuel allowance, the River Thames and fairtrade goods. Cllr Roberts admitted that ‘chances are, as with most of our motions, the government won’t pay us a blind bit of difference.’ Due to space constraints, we will cover the debates in next week’s edition.

The mayor closed the meeting at 9:41 p.m., thanking everyone for being well-behaved and completing a lot of business by 10 p.m.

You can see the papers for the meeting and the webcast by clicking [HERE](#)

CONNECTING WITH NATURE ON HAM LANDS & NEARBY GREEN SPACES

FOR WORLD HABITATS DAY

JOIN US FOR OUR EVENTS!



Come to our **FREE TALK**
to discover:

The natural history of
Ham Lands,
Different life on Ham
Lands,
And the link between
wellbeing and nature



Monday 7th October
6:30pm - 7:30pm
St. Richard's Church
Ashburnham Rd,
Richmond, TW10 7NL

Everyone is welcome!

LITTER PICKING in
Ham Lands and
surrounding areas

7th - 12th October

Help clear our beautiful
environment of harmful
litter



Slots are available all
week. Scan the QR code
below to book!



or go to
www.trybooking.com/uk/DWFW

These events are organised by Friends of Ham Lands, Habitats &
Heritage and Richmond Council



Book your winter vaccines to protect yourself and your loved ones

From Thursday 3 October, most eligible people will be able to get their flu and COVID-19 vaccines. All those eligible are urged to join the millions of others who have taken up their free vaccines offer to get winter strong.

Respiratory viruses, such as flu, usually reach their peak over the festive and new year period. To ensure we do not miss the festive celebrations with friends and family, and to help everyone stay well in winter, book your vaccination today.



As immunity fades over time and viruses change each year, it is important to top up your protection, even if you have had a vaccine or been ill with flu or COVID-19 before.

If you are vaccinated and catch flu or COVID-19 this winter, you are likely to have milder symptoms and recover faster, cutting your risk of being hospitalised.

Most eligible adults will be able to get their flu vaccine from 3

October. This may be later than you've had the vaccine before, but it means you'll have the best protection when flu is most widespread. Pregnant women and children will continue to be able to get the flu vaccine from September.

If you are aged 65 or over, have certain health conditions, or are pregnant, you are eligible for free flu and COVID-19 vaccines. [Check your eligibility and book an appointment.](#)

School-aged children (from reception to year 11) will mainly be offered their flu vaccinations at school. There will be further opportunities for children to get vaccinated in NHS community clinics, including for the home educated. For most children, the vaccine is a nasal spray, not an injection. It is quick and painless.

Pregnant women are now eligible for the RSV vaccine and should also get their whooping cough vaccine. Both vaccines are passed through the placenta to the baby, protecting them in the first few months of life and can stop them from becoming seriously ill. Pregnant women should speak to their GP or maternity team for more information.



Richmond Council Faces Tough Questions at the Community Conversation

In a lively “Community Conversation” held at Clarendon Hall, York House, on 24th September, Richmond Council fielded a range of pressing questions from local residents, addressing concerns about high street vacancies, accessibility for disabled residents, and the future of Pensford Field. Chaired by Council Leader Cllr Gareth Roberts, the meeting covered key local issues, with committee chairs providing responses to questions about the borough’s plans and challenges.

High Street Vacancies and Economic Recovery

Susie Newwood, a Twickenham resident, kicked off the discussion by raising concerns over the increasing number of vacant shops in the borough. “I walk past the empty Burger King every morning, which has been closed for years. There are banks that have been empty for at least a year, if not more. Why is this happening, and what are your plans to address it?” she asked, adding that the area was looking “desolate.”

Cllr Phil Giesler, the council’s spokesperson for business and economic growth, acknowledged that the borough’s high streets had struggled in recent years but pointed to broader economic challenges. “We’ve been through some tough economic times over the last five years—Covid, Brexit, and the ongoing cost of living crisis,” he said. He also pointed out that retail trends had changed, with many residents now preferring online shopping, particularly for groceries and fashion items.

Despite the gloomy outlook, Cllr Giesler provided some positive news, noting that Richmond and Twickenham’s vacancy rates were still below the national average. “Twickenham’s vacancy rate is at eight percent, Richmond’s is at a similar level. That’s well below the country’s average, and we’ve largely recovered to pre-Covid levels,” he said. He then mentioned that new tenants were expected soon at the vacant Whole Foods and House of Fraser sites in Richmond.

However, Susie Newwood pressed further, asking whether some of the long-vacant shops could be repurposed for housing. “There are shops that have been empty for years. Could they be turned into homes, given the housing crisis?” she asked. Cllr Giesler explained that while the idea had potential, converting retail spaces into housing was not always straightforward. “We don’t own most of the empty shops, so we can’t control that directly. But we are working with landlords where we can, and we’ve encouraged pop-up shops in some locations,” he said.

Accessibility for Disabled Residents

Victoria Nurse, another resident, raised concerns about the accessibility of new developments and pedestrianised areas, questioning how the council was ensuring that disabled people’s needs were taken into account. “What are you doing to ensure that disabled people are included in conversations about accessibility? I’ve heard that curbside services don’t work well in bad weather. We used to have a Disability Advisory Group for Access (DAGA), but that’s been stopped,” she said.

Cllr Nancy Baldwin, spokesperson for communities and equalities, assured her that accessibility remained a top priority for the council. “Every single time we’re thinking of a new building or service, we ask, ‘Can everyone access it? Can everyone make the best use of it?’” She also offered to meet with Victoria to discuss the possibility of reinstating a forum for disabled residents. “I would love to get together with you to discuss re-establishing something like DAGA,” Councillor Baldwin said, reaffirming the council’s commitment to inclusivity.

Empty Shops

Simon Garnett, an online participant, posed a question about the potential to repurpose vacant shops for community purposes. “Is there an opportunity to turn empty shops into community spaces for

charitable purposes, such as reuse and repair services?” he asked.

Cllr Giesler welcomed the suggestion but cautioned that the council’s ability to act was limited by property ownership. “I’d love to see more community uses for vacant shops, but most of these buildings are owned by private landlords, not the council,” he explained. Councillor Giesler cited the Patch community and business centre in Twickenham as an example of successful reuse but noted that each case required negotiation with landlords, some of whom are difficult to engage with.

Cllr Julia Neden-Watts added that the council was working on a “circular economy hub” to promote sustainability. “We’re exploring a location in the borough where waste can be reused as resources for new products,” she said, explaining that the project was still in its early stages.

The Future of Pensford Field

A particularly heated topic of the evening was the council’s decision to transfer the lease of Pensford Field from the Pensford Field Environmental Trust to A Dose of Nature, a mental health charity. A resident asked, “How do you justify taking the lease away from the Pensford Field Environmental Trust with no consultation and just donating it to another institution?” Referring to the council’s shock early termination of the lease.

Council Leader Cllr Gareth Roberts defended the decision, stating that the mental health charity’s services were urgently needed in the borough. “A Dose of Nature is a well-respected mental health provision, and we risked losing it from the borough altogether,” he explained. Cllr Roberts also assured residents that community use and access to the field would be maintained. “No lease has been signed yet, and we will ensure that community use remains part of the new lease,” he added.

However, residents expressed dissatisfaction with the council’s handling of the situation. Diana Dunrosnell, a trustee of the Pensford Field Environmental Trust, said, “The decision was taken in July, but we were only informed in September. None of the local community or schools that use the field were consulted. The council’s actions have been both unconstitutional and appalling.”

Cllr Roberts admitted that the situation could have been better handled. “It wasn’t communicated well, and I have apologised for that,” he said, offering to facilitate a meeting between the Trust and Dose of Nature to find a way forward. “We want to ensure that the high standards of ecological conservation are maintained,” Cllr Roberts added.

Traffic and Accessibility Concerns

Traffic issues were also raised during the meeting, particularly in relation to Twickenham’s busy roads. Pete Kane asked, “I walk through central Twickenham every morning, and there’s always a long queue of traffic on Cross Deep. Could the traffic light timings be adjusted to help ease the congestion?” Councillor Ehmann responded by noting that traffic signals were managed by Transport for London (TfL), but he promised to bring the issue to their attention. “We will look into whether adjustments can be made to the light timings,” he said, though he acknowledged that any changes would need to be approved by TfL.

VAT on Private School Fees

David Boddy, the headmaster of St James School, raised a critical question regarding the impact of VAT on private school fees during a recent community meeting. He inquired about the council’s stance on the proposed policy to impose VAT, asking, “What effect do you think this will have on local independent schools and the broader educational landscape in Richmond?” In response, the Chair of the Education and Children’s Services Committee acknowledged the potential ramifications, stating, “If private education becomes less affordable, we may see increased demand for state school places, particularly at secondary level. We will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure we can support all students.”

However, David Boddy was not satisfied with the council's response. He expressed concern, stating, "I'm afraid, and I don't want to put any edge on this, but I do think it's quite out of touch, frankly, with the reality of the situation." He went on to say "While I may no longer hold the position of headmaster, I continue to follow the issue closely. I can tell you that this imposition of VAT is forcing parents to withdraw," he warned, underscoring the urgent need for the council to take the potential consequences seriously as the educational landscape in Richmond hangs in the balance.

20 Miles Per Hour Speed Limit

In a heated exchange during the meeting, Clive Osborne did not hold back in his criticism of the council's governance, asserting, "I think you're a very authoritarian regime." He voiced strong opposition to a proposal, highlighting that "in my ward, which is Whitton, 71.6% of the people there said that they did not want it."

Councillor Alexander Ehmann, Chair of the Transport Committee, passionately defended the council's commitment to public safety, firmly prioritising it over personal convenience. "If your personal convenience of travelling an extra 10 miles an hour is more important to you than the safety of your fellow man, I don't break bread with that particular view," he asserted, clearly illustrating the council's stance on road safety. Ehmann also reminded attendees of the democratic process, stating, "Every four years, you have the opportunity to elect us or another political party." This declaration underscored the ongoing tensions between residents' concerns and the council's often idealistic vision for the borough's future. As the dialogue unfolded, it became evident that finding common ground on these issues remains a challenge for both the council and the community it serves.

Police Stations

The absence of a dedicated police presence in Richmond's town centre, following the closure of Richmond police station has sparked considerable concern among residents. One resident inquired, "What progress has been made in establishing a police base in Richmond Town Centre, and why has it taken so long?" In response, Cllr Alexander Ehmann explained that delays were largely due to the Metropolitan Police's estates strategy, which has left the council with limited authority over property decisions. "We are actively working with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to push for a police base in central Richmond," he stated. However, he underscored that the financial responsibility for funding a police station should not fall on the council, as public safety is primarily a matter for the police and central government.

This stance reveals a critical insight into the council's approach to utilising Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. While many boroughs are leveraging these funds to help finance new facilities such as police stations and GP surgeries, Richmond Council's reluctance to contribute could hinder the development of vital services in the area. As a result, local residents may find themselves at a disadvantage, with the police force and the NHS potentially directing their investments towards areas where councils are more willing to support infrastructure costs by co-funding them.

Looking Forward

As the meeting drew to a close, council members acknowledged the challenges ahead but emphasized their commitment to addressing residents' concerns. Council Leader Gareth Roberts thanked attendees for their participation, saying, "We understand the concerns, and we're working hard to make Richmond a thriving, accessible place for everyone." The council promised to follow up on issues discussed during the session and continue working with the community to find solutions.

You can view the webcast of the meeting by clicking [HERE](#)

Delightful Delhi Social

If, like so many folk, you tend to head to central Twickenham when you fancy going out for a curry, think again. Head towards Richmond, and along from York House in the building that previously housed Wags 'n' Tails, you'll find a really stupendous Indian restaurant: **Delhi Social**. It's actually been open for nearly a year, and has already built up a strongly loyal customer base. The proprietors are chef

Manish Sharma and general manager **Avi Patel**, who'd previously worked together at Black Salt in East Sheen. The restaurant is deceptively large, and has a number of different dining areas. We were at the back, with views of the fairy-lit courtyard garden, which would be fab in the summer. Tables are well spaced out and the atmosphere's relaxed, friendly and very comfortable.

We started our meal with a couple of cocktails and some poppadoms. For me a **Delhi Gin Raja** (gin, mint, Amaro Montenegro and lime) and for my husband a mocktail, **Kashmiri Soda**. My gin cocktail was sharp, yet smooth and refreshingly delicate. It was the very essence of a proper cocktail. The Kashmiri soda (black pepper, dry ginger, black salt, jeera, coriander) looked a tad murky and strange but tasted delicious, with an earthiness and gentle heat coming through. All the cocktails are £12 and the mocktails vary from £4.50. Two kinds of poppadoms were served with very good spicy tomato chutney, as well as lime pickle and mango chutney.



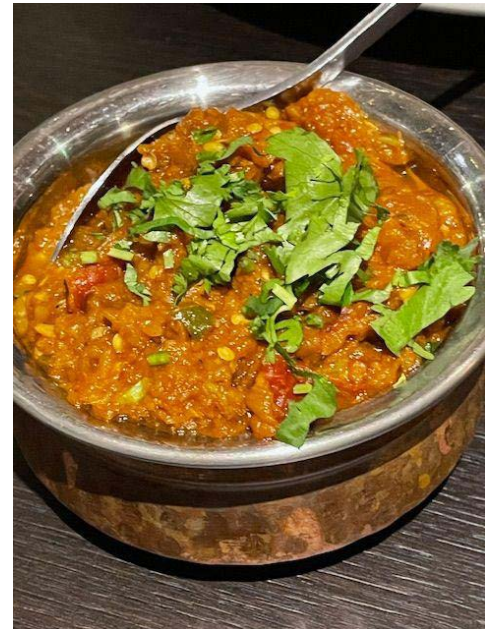
For our starters, Avi suggested we try the **spinach & kale bhajiyas**, **tandoori monkfish** and **lamb samosa**. The monkfish was served with coriander chutney which gave it a gentle heat that gradually builds up in the mouth, but the dish is so delicately spiced that the fish retains its flavour and texture and isn't overpowered. The bhajiyas...well, what can I say? They were beautifully crisp, bursting with spices - soft inside but not greasy. My husband declared them the best he'd ever tasted. The samosa was a generous portion - a little pyramid-shaped mountain of flavour, a crispy crust packed with delicately spiced minced lamb, peas and herbs. Then there was a lingering coriander note, but no great heat - it too was fab.



For our mains I chose **kacha aam prawn curry** (coconut, raw mango, prawns, curry leaves) and my husband a **venison keema peas** (venison mince, green peas, garam masala). Avi suggested a portion of steamed rice to accompany and never one to turn down the chance of a Peshwari naan, we also had a **mango peshwari naan**. Avi was spot on with the rice suggestion as both dishes were so well spiced they didn't need the additional spices of pulao rice.

Both of our mains were superb - the prawn curry was packed with big fat prawns in a rich, creamy sauce, which wasn't coconut heavy as can often be the case. The venison curry was a new addition to the menu apparently. It was fragrant, fairly spicy but very meaty and again the skill of the chef enhanced the meat without masking its inherent flavour.

A side of **baingan bharta** (roasted aubergine, onion tomato) proved to be another unexpected star of the show - it was smokey, smooth and packed with flavour. If I was to return as a vegetarian, I would consider ordering this with the fabulous peshwari naan as my main course (or a light lunch).



Not surprisingly, we were pretty full, but the suggestion of kulfi was a welcome one. I chose mango and my husband had pistachio. They were the perfect end to an excellent meal. I had a large glass of the house white wine, (Fábula de Paniza' Garnacha Blanca Bodegas Paniza, Cariñena, Spain 2022) which at £8 was very reasonably priced. We were served by the delightful Vrunda, who told us that her name in fact means basil, which is a holy plant.

To sum up, Twickenham is lucky that Avi and Manish chose to open Delhi Social here. They've priced the menu very fairly and it's affordable, but excellent value for the quality of the food.

As well as the a la carte, there's a lunch menu with two courses for £15.95 or three for £18.95. As I type up this review and look at the photos, I'm feeling hungry and keen to return...

Local Business Profile: Chimmy's

During the summer I discovered a lovely local company that makes the most delicious range of Chimichurri sauces. What is Chimichurri you might be asking? Well, according to Wikipedia: Chimichurri is an uncooked sauce used as an ingredient in cooking and as a table condiment for grilled meat. Found originally in Argentina and used in Argentinian, Uruguayan, Paraguayan and Brazilian cuisines, it has become widely adopted in most of Latin America. The sauce comes in green and red varieties.



So it seems logical that a local company producing Chimichurri would have Argentinian roots...and **Chimmy's Chimichurri** certainly has that. Founders **Sofia and Diego Cardoso** were born in Buenos Aires but now, luckily for us here in the UK, live in Brentford. Diego's background is as a chef who's worked in a number of Michelin-starred establishments under such esteemed names as Gordon Ramsay and Angela Hartnett.

Having made quite a few batches of chimichurri at home for friends when entertaining, he and Sofia decided to take the plunge and start producing it as a business. It was actually down to some good friends getting married, who asked the couple to bring supplies of their sauce to the wedding BBQ as a wedding present. Huge critical acclaim from the guests persuaded Sofia and Diego to launch **CHIMMY'S**. It took a few years before Sofia could step away from her full time job with a furniture company and concentrate solely on CHIMMY'S, but in just over a year, the company has gone from strength to strength - and having tasted the sauces, I'm not at all surprised.

The CHIMMY'S recipe is Diego's, and draws on his Argentinian heritage, his stellar chef credentials and understanding of British and European palates. The result is a rich, russet coloured sauce made from an all-natural blend of dried herbs and spices, combined with red pepper, tomato and paprika. Less oil is used than is usual for chimichurri, so CHIMMY'S contains less fat and fewer calories, which appeals to European tastes. CHIMMY'S sauces are free from preservatives, additives, flavourings or colourings, as well as all 14 allergens, and are vegan friendly. The range comprises: **Classic chimichurri** (an everyday sauce to give your dishes an extra kick) **Smoky BBQ** (smokey and rich with a little bit of sweetness at the end) and **Spicy** (with extra heat to tickle the taste buds).

The sauces can, of course, be used in addition to, or instead of ketchup, but they have a host of other applications. I've used them as dips, for marinades and as an ingredient in salad dressings, casseroles and all manner of other dishes. And even though the BBQ season has drawn to a close, I'm finding that I reach for one of them when I want to add that extra 'zing' to a dish.



CHIMMY'S sauces retail for around £5.45 and can be found online at Ocado or www.chimmys.com, and on shelf in Selfridges, Hilliers Garden Centres and independent stores nationwide.

sunborn
GIBRALTAR
YACHT HOTEL RESORT



CHRISTMAS PACKAGE



PACKAGE INCLUDES:

WELCOME AMENITIES | BREAKFAST BUFFET
CHRISTMAS DINNER ON THE 24TH DECEMBER
CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH (venue to be pre-booked, subject to availability)
1X CHRISTMAS PAMPER VOUCHER AT SUNBORN INFINITY SPA (£50)

Book 21st to 28th December, 7 nights £1400

For 2 guests in a Super Yacht Superior Room

Book 24th to 26th December, 2 nights £595

For 2 guests in Super Yacht Superior Room

Terms and conditions: offer Subject to availability in all outlets
Bookings can not be combined with other bookings. Reservations must be made directly via phone or email cannot be extended to third party bookings
Pre payment is required and bookings cannot be cancelled or modified.

TO BOOK CONTACT: +350 200 16900 | RESERVATIONS@SUNBORNGIBRALTAR.COM

They Come in friendship.

Not to be confused with the Spanish Armada!

By Bruce Lyons



*Is this the ecofriendly tourism of the future,
and is our borough going to be a key player?*

I wrote last week about the Unique Great River Race now in its 36th year. Overtime, rowers from around the world have competed. Once we had Australians and they came for a month & who rowed in races in Dublin and Scotland as well. Often there are many crews from Holland and Ireland and for several years, Chepe from Navigatio Santander has taken this up a bar. They have come several times, for a quick visit but this year they came, with their boat Pilgrim for three weeks – traveling on Low Footprint Brittany Ferries and combined the trip with the famous Scottish Row, Castle to Crane on the Clyde after which they toured the UK to Wales & the historical Appin and Mumbles Skiffs clubs, then on to Bristol, Bridport and finally Chichester, always rowing with friendly clubs and enjoying their hospitality before finally ending up at Ham for the GRR – The Iconic Thames race from Greenwich to Ham.

Maybe in the years to come we can take British Clubs to the continent, and they can do the same? In this world with concerns with overtourism it is refreshing to have these fascinating trips with low carbon footprints

This year's race seemed to take the race to a new level. The Americans have already told me that the three boats they had this year are likely to be 5 next year. They also had several rowers that used the visit to see other parts of the country. Next year the race is on 20th September, luckily not clashing with the Women's World Cup, which has its final at the Alliance Stadium a week later (27th September).

All these racers took lots of accommodation in the borough as well, and also wined and dined at all the eateries around. Low key tourism at its best.



October means...

By Deep Patel

~ Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



Tegenaria gigantea (or the “giant house spider”) is not everyone’s favourite creature. This is the spider that all of us have seen sprinting like there is no tomorrow at full speed across the living room floor whilst you’re watching your favourite show on the telly...they have a dark body with a hairy appearance...but this spider is harmless and they do us good, they hunt tiny allergy/ skin irritating mites and ticks that we all have in our homes acting as a “free live-in cleaner”!

I want everyone reading this to take a moment to pity the house spider ...firstly when the male goes to woo the female, he has to do a ritualistic dance that resembles the YMCA dance and if the female doesn’t like his dance, she may reject him, attack him, kill him and eat him...to those reading this, be grateful that you are not a male giant house spider...for the successful male spider, once the deed of reproduction has been done, he will allow himself to die in the web so that he can offer his body for the female to eat so his body can continue to nourish his unborn young after his death...how’s that for a father of the year award? SO next time you see a giant house spider...have mercy and if you must put it outside, place in a shed or garage as they need warm conditions to live and will likely die if just thrown out of the window in the autumn/winter. You can mix a spoon of essential peppermint oil into a cup of water and after into a spray bottle and spritz corners of rooms or edges of windows daily. Spiders taste things using their feet and hate the taste of peppermint so will stay away. Try to avoid spraying near pets, or use white vinegar 50/50 mix with water as a spray as that works too. White vinegar left in bowls around places you don’t want mice, rats squirrels and foxes stops them kindly without harming. Humane live-capture traps for mice are best and to release them after into woodland areas away from homes as mouse poison makes them suffer for days and damages the entire food chain after.

For any other kind and FREE “pest” control tips, join my facebook group “INSECT LOVERS UNITE” or email: InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com it’s good karma to choose kindness!

Blithe Spirit

by Noël Coward

The Questors at the Judi Dench Playhouse, Ealing until 5th October

The news that special cocktails are being served adds to the 30's feel of *Blithe Spirit*. Such a shame: I'm driving! In a polished performance of Noël Coward's ethereal comedy, under Frances McNally's direction, the wit is sparkling, the ghosts are ghostly, and the speech suitably clipped. Costumes by Nicola Thomas are perfectly in period, and I would happily move into Alex Marker's beautiful art deco set.

Charles and Ruth Condomine are waiting for their guests to arrive to join them for dinner and have arranged after-dinner entertainment. This is to be a séance, overseen by the famed medium, Madame Arcati. Noël Coward must have attended such an evening and been supremely unimpressed by the very idea of psychic happenings.



The interaction between Robert Seatter and Kate Langston's Mr and Mrs Condomine ably demonstrates the playful weariness of a couple well into their second marriage. Here is louche upper class society, urbane husband and sophisticated wife. Sweta Gupta perfectly channels her *Acorn Antiques* waitress as the comically clumsy maid Edith, anxious to please, yet exasperated with her demanding master and mistress.

The arrival of Dr and Mrs Bradman (Samantha Moran and Anthony Curran) soon confirms that they all intend to have a fun evening. There is subtle humour as the doctor manages to frustrate his wife's desire to have just another drink. Nobody intends to take things seriously.

The arrival of Madame Arcati gives the chance to delight in Annabelle Williams' jolly-hockey-sticks version of the eccentric medium. The hapless psychic, with her spirit-child guide, attempts to reach the "other side" with lot of mumbo jumbo and a convincing trance.

Nothing seem to happen and she leaves. But the spirits are not so easily tampered with, and soon the fun begins. A ghostly apparition causes much mischief causing grief to the hosts and delight to the returning Arcati.

It seems invidious to pick out one performance from such a skilled cast, but Claire Durant's performance was delightful, alternately coy and demanding, as Elvira, the post-mortem generator of all this mischievous mayhem.

Read Polly Davies' review at www.markaspen.com/2024/09/28/blithe-q

Photography by Robert Vass

Flare Path

by Terence Rattigan

Putney Theatre Company at Putney Arts Theatre

Set in a small Lincolnshire hotel in 1941, *Flare Path* opens with authentic radio broadcasts and sounds of low flying planes. It is a gem. Based on Rattigan's own experience in World War Two as a tail gunner in RAF Coastal Command, the story is recounted in clear detail.

In the lobby Doris, looking good in stilettos and wartime attire, leafs through a magazine, smoking a cigarette. The earthy and good-humoured Doris is Countess Skriczevinsky, and she is deeply in love with her Polish Count, or to use his full title, Flying Officer Count Skriczevinsky. The Count is dashing, yet quite endearing as he playfully and painfully learns the English language. Martin Razpopov plays the airman with sincerity, and Lois Savill's Doris has an engaging empathy.



Sergeant 'Dusty' Miller and his irritable yet vivacious wife Maudie, played with pathos and humour by Jacob Smith and Lizzie Ireldeale, display true emotion despite the turmoil that surrounds them.

The exuberant Flight Lieutenant Teddy Graham, played by Theo Leonard, is a fighter pilot. The strains on his well-being, caused by the stress of many sorties, are revealed layer by layer as he confronts his demons, supported by his, albeit unfaithful, wife, well known as the actress Patricia Warren.

When Peter Kyle, a fading Hollywood actor still revered by Doris, turns up, he is greeted coldly by Mrs Oakes, the haughty and strict proprietor of the hotel, excellently portrayed by Megan Good. However, his arrival thrusts Patricia into turmoil. Guy Robarts as Kyle has that movie star stance and Emma Bugg's Patricia has the sophistication and glamour of a leading actress. Their allure is enough to draw us into their very personal story.

The endearing intrusiveness of Zachary Matcham's young waiter Percy, and the wry humour and support of Paul Bradley as Squadron Leader 'Gloria' Swanson are great assets to this montage of actors, expressing the joy and dread experienced in wartime.

With its Peter Rees' gentle and sensitive lighting, the well-researched costumes and set by Simon Crump, and Sarah Jillings's props, take one straight into the period.

Directed by Ian Higham, this production has a very human feel and his *Flare Path* is a touching tribute to this significant era in history.

Read Heather Moulson's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/09/29/flare-ptc

Photography by Steve Lippitt

Suor Angelica

by Giacomo Puccini, libretto by Giovacchino Forzano
English National Opera at the London Coliseum

Suor Angelica, one of Puccini's late works, tells of one woman's psychological torment. Angelica, sent to a stark convent to atone for having a child out of wedlock, holds on to the thought of her son, taken from her at birth. When, after seven years, her aunt arrives, demanding she give up her inheritance and coldly tells her that her son has died, Angelica's purpose is extinguished.

Irish director [Annilese Miskimmon](#)'s heart-wrenching production is geo-politically charged, updating the setting to the 1960s Magdalene laundries in Ireland, where women were condemned to lifelong servitude for out-of-wedlock births.



This triggers a powerful commentary, compelling us to ask how such systemic injustice could have occurred. If this happened so recently in Ireland, how can we be sure our systems are any better than subjugation in communist regimes? Have current trends in social media and "cancel culture" created a new axis of persecution? It's rare for an opera to raise such profound, relevant questions with such emotional intensity.

Suor Angelica is musically challenging. The tonality is fluid, and moments of unsettling entropy destabilize the harmony, adding to the

unease. Yet, in moments of hope, Puccini's lyrical richness emerges. Conductor Corinna Niemeyer skilfully navigates these shifts, integrating the orchestra into the psychological development of the story.

Sinéad Campbell-Wallace, in the title role, and Christine Rice as the aunt were particularly impressive. Campbell-Wallace's range was extraordinary, her subtle vibrato perfect for the convent setting, and her aria about her child's death heartrending. Rice brought nuance as the aunt, portraying a woman blind to her own cruelty. Rice's rich mezzo emphasised her character's self-righteousness, especially when casually revealing that Angelica's son died two years earlier, a chilling moment.

The staging is visually striking, with monumental sheets hanging above the stage, a visceral reminder that this is not a distant tale. The desk symbolizes power; and the conversation between the aunt and Angelica across the desk becomes a battle between evil and purity. The Madonna is a limp idol, prayed to, but offering little comfort.

This production is a tour de force, ambitious in raising difficult social questions while delivering an emotionally charge. Bring tissues, and bring friends: you'll want to discuss it into the early hours. *Suor Angelica*'s themes are as big and relevant as they come.

Read Susan Furnell's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/09/28/suor-ang-eno

Photography by Genevieve Girling

Faith, Hope, Love

Never Let Me Go

by Suzanne Heathcote, after the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro

Rose Original with Bristol Old Vic *et al* at the Rose Theatre, Kingston until 12th October, then on tour until 30th November.

Faith, hope and love, St Paul's hierarchy of the strength and longevity of emotions, is beautifully illustrated in this all-absorbing story of a society that teeters between morality and expediency, between humanity and pragmatism.

Never Let Me Go is a future history of what could be. It is that could-be that makes it so thought-provoking, compelling and chilling; especially in the clean simplicity of director Christopher Haydon's story-telling in this powerful world première production.

The pupils of the exclusive Hailsham School have an unerring faith in their common mission in life, which is all too literally self-sacrificing. They hope the art they create has sublime significance, and hope that they will have the opportunity to enjoy life's emotions. As they progress from childhood to adulthood, the most overwhelming of these emotions becomes love: therein lies the humanity.

Designer [Tom Piper](#)'s set has a crispness, its beech-wood walls framing an open semi-circle. It could be the foyer of a spa hotel, an atrium in a private hospital, or the hall of an expensive boarding school. In fact, it is something of all of these. While its roof-lights promise the sky, the translucent windows accentuate the unseen outside.



It is difficult at first to untangle the significance of this world of cryptonyms and euphemisms. Gradually it becomes clear that the young people are parentless, as they have been cloned. They exist solely to provide a harvestable

source of healthy human organs. They accept their purpose in life, almost as an honour. Each “donor” can have three organs removed. On the fourth, they “complete”. All is clean, tidy ... and inevitable.



One of the remarkable aspects of this production is that the younger members of the cast are mostly inexperienced. Yet, their acting skills are impeccable. They live these parts, not act them.

The action is focussed on Kathy H, who reluctantly tells her story, becomes a *de facto* narrator. Her memoir is a mixed chronology of short flashbacks that overlap in action and dialogue. Nell

Barlow plays Kathy in a natural unaffected manner, in an outstanding performance.

Kathy finds a tape which includes the song [Never Let Me Go](#). She fantasises about holding a baby, and is seen dancing by the mysterious Madame, who is moved to tears.

Kathy's closest friends in the school are Tommy D, a geeky youth, and Ruth C, pushy, bossy and bitchy. Matilda Bailes portrays a feisty and artful Ruth whose arrogance mellows into self-awareness. Angus Imrie shines as Tommy, the awkward adolescent emerging as a thoughtful but spirited young man.

Hailsham is eventually shown to be a well-meaning experiment to improve the clones' life and to show the world, through art, that they are human. The experiment has failed.

Never Let Me Go's probing slipstream fiction shines a light on the dark slippery slope in today's world, where a dehumanising state can even legislate away biological truths. Where abortion is accepted, and euthanasia soon will be, then there the practice of farming human donors becomes more than a possibility. Where human life is devalued, the soul is too.



Virgil asserts that love conquers all, and that is the message of the closing scenes of *Never Let Me Go*. Faith has proved a false friend and hope is illusory. Yet, with Paulian certainty, love remains the greatest of the three.

Read Mark Aspen's review at www.markaspen.com/2024/09/26/never-go

Photography by Hugo Glendinning



RICHMOND SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY



JOIN US

A vibrant, dynamic and welcoming amateur theatre company in the heart of Twickenham (south-west London), the RSS specialises in bringing the timeless works of Shakespeare to life, along with captivating performances from various genres. Whether you're a performer, a behind-the-scenes maestro, or a theatre lover, there are multiple opportunities to be involved. We believe in the power of inclusivity, fostering a warm and supportive environment.

richmondshakespeare.org.uk

THE MARY WALLACE THEATRE
THE EMBANKMENT, TWICKENHAM TW1 3DU



Local author inspired by Orleans House & Sheen Priory, new novel praised by Stephen Fry

Adam Howorth

Fallen Feathers is an accomplished time-slip novel, combining myth and folklore with a contemporary tale of family, love and dangerous secrets in a London suburb.

Reminiscent of Kazuo Ishiguro and Angela Carter, debut author Adam Howorth shows a real gift for world creation, as he skilfully weaves an evocative, fantastical tale and deftly explores the nature of faith and existence, through the dual lens of childhood innocence and increasingly desperate parenthood.



Enthralling. A serious achievement.
Stephen Fry

Fallen Feathers



Adam Howorth

An enchanting world that is thoroughly immersive

Original and arresting. The is an element of late Ishiguro

Elizabeth Fairchild loved the moon. For as long as anyone could remember, she knew instinctively when it had risen and where it was in the sky. But when the south of England experiences a rare super blood moon, Elizabeth goes missing and the race is on to find her before the eclipse is over and she is lost forever.

A priest tells Elizabeth's father about another local girl who went missing years before and was never found. They discover a number of other similarities, including a strong physical resemblance between the two girls. As they start to piece together what happened, they find they are not the only ones searching for Elizabeth.

A stranger visits the church and tells the priest the clues to her disappearance lie in an ancient prophecy from a book found in a house in the middle of the woods. The prophecy states that Elizabeth is special, a golden child, and generations of people have waited for her, she is their messiah. But to save them she has to die. When the past collides with modern-day life, the hunt for Elizabeth begins.

Fallen Feathers is a spellbinding, epic contemporary tale of family, love, and dangerous secrets.

Calling all local artists to take part in Orleans House Gallery's winter show

If you are a Richmond-based artist looking to display your work as part of a group exhibition in the Stables Gallery, don't miss this chance! Submit your artwork before Monday 14 October.

Submissions are welcome across visual and contemporary art forms, both 2D and 3D. Your submission could be artwork that you have already produced, or a new work in response to this call-out.

Applicants can submit one piece of work to be reviewed by the selection committee. The deadline for proposals is 11.59pm on Monday 14 October. The work submitted, if selected, must be the work brought to the exhibition, you cannot make anything different retrospectively.



The exhibition will run from 29 November 2024 to 2 February 2025 and will coincide with the gallery's Christmas Shopping Weekend on Saturday 30 November and Sunday 1 December. All exhibited work will be available for purchase. Participation is free, however Orleans House Gallery will take a 40% commission on works sold.

[Find out more and apply](#)

Explore arts and literature at Richmond Reads this autumn

Throughout October and November, Richmond Libraries are hosting Richmond Reads 2024, an annual season of events celebrating the joys and benefits of reading.

Richmond Reads 2024 is a vibrant and diverse programme designed to welcome new and existing visitors through our doors, especially those who may never have visited a library or who have not been for a long time.

Activities and events will take place across libraries in the borough, featuring a dance performance, author talks, interactive theatre, workshops and more.



You can view [the full Richmond Reads programme and book your tickets now](#).

The Eel Pie Pub, Twickenham

LIVE MUSIC

AT THE EEL PIE
OCTOBER 2024

**ROLAND
PAUL**

**FRIDAY 4TH
FRIDAY 25TH**

MIKE GILL

SATURDAY 5TH



**BILLY RAY
COOPER**

**VINYL
NIGHT**

**DAVE
MAC
TRIO**

St Mary's University

St Mary's Awarded £300k Grant to Develop Apprenticeships

The Office for Students (OfS) has today announced that St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) has been awarded a grant of almost £300k to develop new degree apprenticeship programmes.

for St Mary's. We believe that degree apprenticeships are a vitally important route for students looking to engage in higher education in less traditional ways, and this aligns with our strong commitment to widening access to university study."



St Mary's Head of Apprenticeships Eleanor Stewart added, "I am delighted that SMU has been successful in securing OfS funding to support the delivery of three new degree apprenticeships. This new funding will lift financial barriers to entry, and will enable new Teachers, Physiotherapists and Youth workers to gain a degree while working."

These apprenticeship standards have been developed to align with areas of recognised expertise and excellence at SMU. The School of Education at the University was recently named as the [no 1 provider of education degrees in the country by the Daily Mail University Guide](#).

The Office for Students (OfS) has today announced that St Mary's University, Twickenham (SMU) has been awarded a grant of almost £300k to develop new degree apprenticeship programmes.

The new degree apprenticeships are part of SMU's mission to widen access to higher education and will help people in the local community gain access to the key skills they need to take the next steps in their careers.

SMU will offer the degree apprenticeships in three standards to help new teachers, physiotherapists, and youth workers upskill and gain a degree alongside their full-time job.

Speaking of the funding St Mary's Interim Provost and Chief Academic Officer Prof Sara Spear said, "This is a brilliant development

The School of Education also recently retained its Ofsted Outstanding rating for its third consecutive inspection. The school achieved the Outstanding rating across all categories for Primary and Secondary initial teacher training.

If you would like to find out more about these new degree



**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**

apprenticeships as a business or prospective student, please email apprenticeships@stmarys.ac.uk.

World champion Soh Wai Ching has 'unfinished business' as he takes on second RNLI Tower Run

World champion Tower Runner, Soh Wai Ching from Malaysia, has confirmed he will be taking part in his second RNLI Tower Run in London this October – and this time he has one aim - to beat his previous record. The RNLI Tower Run, which takes place on Saturday 12 October, is the tallest and toughest ever in the UK. The event has already attracted more than 200 competitors who will run, walk or crawl 1,500 steps over 58 floors to the top of 22 Bishopsgate to raise funds to pay for the charity's 24/7 lifesaving service.

Soh Wai Ching, 30, from Petaling Jaya near Kuala Lumpur is currently ranked No 1 in the World, a title he has been maintaining for two and a half years. In May he became World Champion following the Taipei 101 vertical marathon. He is also Founder and the Secretary of Malaysia Towerrunning Association (MTA).

He said: *'To me, back in 2022, I didn't achieve my best time, so I personally think it's unfinished business. I think the time can still be improved and faster – set the bar higher so it stays there for a long time.'*



Wai Ching hopes to complete the 2024 RNLI Tower Run in 6.45 minutes, seven seconds faster than his performance in 2022. He will be well warmed up for it - having taken on the Empire State Building Run-Up in New York just three days before.

RNLI Senior Community Manager Adam Clarke said: *'We are delighted Wai Ching has signed up to take part in his second RNLI Tower Run. He is an amazing athlete and it will be extraordinary to see him beat his previous time.'*

The run's location, at 22 Bishopsgate, holds particular significance for the RNLI as it stands on the very site of the London Tavern where the institution was founded in 1824.

Now, 200 years after that event, the charity that saves lives at sea is calling on supporters to return to this historic spot to help the RNLI continue saving lives at sea.

Since opening on the Thames in 2002 the station's lifeboats have launched more than 18,000 times and saved more than 650 lives, helping not only people in danger on the water, but also those trapped on the foreshore.

'Our crews are always racing to save lives on the Thames so it would give us a tremendous boost to know supporters are also stepping up to this extraordinary challenge to help us continue,' said Tower Station Manager Kevin Maynard. 'It seems really fitting that this event is taking place where the RNLI first started,' he added.

The event will take place on Saturday 12 October and those making it to the top floors will be treated to incredible uninterrupted views across London. Those taking part will also be able to toast their success at a special reception celebrating their fundraising efforts.

People can still sign up to race as there are places remaining or can support the event, even if they aren't running, by donating through the just giving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/rnli-tower-run-2024>



Lifeboats

Red Roses Team To Play New Zealand

Red Roses head coach John Mitchell makes 10 changes to his starting XV to take on New Zealand in Round 2 of WXV 1.

Marlie Packer returns to captain the side on what will be prop Hannah Botterman's 50th cap for her country.

The Bristol Bear debuted for England against tournament hosts Canada in 2017 and earns her 25th start on Sunday.

Amy Cokayne and Maud Muir join Botterman in the front row while Zoe Aldcroft packs down with Abbie Ward in the second row.

Natasha Hunt and Holly Aitchison resume their half-back partnership with Tatyana Heard and Helena Rowland combining in the centre.

Abby Dow is back on the wing in a back three that contains Ellie Kildunne and Jess Breach – both of whom started and scored against USA last weekend.

The Red Roses kicked off their WXV 1 campaign with a 61-21 victory over the Eagles at BC Place.

Red Roses team to play New Zealand

15 Ellie Kildunne (Harlequins, 46 caps)
14 Abby Dow (Trailfinders Women, 47 caps)
13 Helena Rowland (Loughborough Lightning, 32 caps)
12 Tatyana Heard (Gloucester-Hartpury, 24 caps)
11 Jess Breach (Saracens, 41 caps)
10 Holly Aitchison (Bristol Bears, 33 caps)
9 Natasha Hunt (Gloucester-Hartpury, 74 caps)

1 Hannah Botterman (Bristol Bears, 49 caps)
2 Amy Cokayne (Leicester Tigers, 77 caps)
3 Maud Muir (Gloucester-Hartpury, 33 caps)
4 Zoe Aldcroft (Gloucester-Hartpury, 56 caps)
5 Abbie Ward (Bristol Bears, 67 caps)
6 Morwenna Talling (Sale Sharks, 16 caps)
7 Marlie Packer (Saracens, 107 caps) - captain
8 Alex Matthews (Gloucester-Hartpury, 70 caps)

Replacements

16 Lark Atkin-Davies (Bristol Bears, 60 caps)
17 Mackenzie Carson (Gloucester-Hartpury, 18 caps)
18 Sarah Bern (Bristol Bears, 64 caps)
19 Rosie Galligan (Saracens, 17 caps)

20 Maddie Feaunati (Exeter Chiefs, 8 caps)
21 Lucy Packer (Harlequins, 24 caps)
22 Zoe Harrison (Saracens, 52 caps)
23 Emily Scarratt (Loughborough Lightning, 114 caps)



RFU

Borthwick names 36-player squad for three-day training camp

England Rugby head coach Steve Borthwick has named a 36-player squad for a three-day training camp ahead of the forthcoming 2024 Autumn Nations Series.

The squad will assemble on Monday 7 October, with training taking place at England's Honda Performance Centre, Pennyhill Park and at Allianz Stadium, Twickenham.

"After watching a competitive and high scoring start to the Premiership season, I am once again looking forward to gathering the players together," said Borthwick. This training camp is an important part of our preparations for the Autumn Nations Series as we continue to build on the cohesion we've developed over the past two campaigns. The squad reflects the depth and quality we have in English rugby, and we are looking forward to working with the players ahead of what will be a highly competitive series."

England welcome New Zealand at Allianz Stadium, Twickenham on Saturday 2 November (kick-off 3.10pm) for their first match of the 2024 Autumn Nations Series, before taking on Australia, South Africa and Japan.

England's 36-player squad:

Forwards:

Fin Baxter (Harlequins)
Ollie Chessum (Leicester Tigers)
Dan Cole (Leicester Tigers)
Alex Coles (Northampton Saints)
Luke Cowan-Dickie (Sale Sharks)
Chandler Cunningham-South (Harlequins)
Theo Dan (Saracens)
Trevor Davison (Northampton Saints)
Ben Earl (Saracens)
Greg Fisilau (Exeter Chiefs)

Ellis Genge (Bristol Bears)
Jamie George (Saracens)
Maro Itoje (Saracens)
Joe Marler (Harlequins)
George Martin (Leicester Tigers)
Tom Pearson (Northampton Saints)
Ethan Roots (Exeter Chiefs)
Will Stuart (Bath Rugby)
Sam Underhill (Bath Rugby)
Tom Willis (Saracens)

Backs:

Oscar Beard (Harlequins)
Elliot Daly (Saracens)
Fraser Dingwall (Northampton Saints)
Immanuel Feyi-Waboso (Exeter Chiefs)
Tommy Freeman (Northampton Saints)
George Furbank (Northampton Saints)
Ollie Lawrence (Bath Rugby)
Alex Lozowski (Saracens)

Harry Randall (Bristol Bears)
Tom Roebuck (Sale Sharks)
Ollie Sleightholme (Northampton Saints)
Fin Smith (Northampton Saints)
Marcus Smith (Harlequins)
Ben Spencer (Bath Rugby)
Freddie Steward (Leicester Tigers)
Jack van Poortvliet (Leicester Tigers)

Rehabilitation: Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs), Alex Dombrandt (Harlequins), Luke Northmore (Harlequins).

Not considered for selection: Joe Cokanasiga (Bath Rugby), Ben Curry (Sale Sharks), Tom Curry (Sale Sharks), George Ford (Sale Sharks), Alex Mitchell (Northampton Saints), Will Muir (Bath Rugby), Max Ojomoh (Bath Rugby), Raffi Quirke (Sale Sharks), Bevan Rodd (Sale Sharks).



Match Preview: Brentford v Wolves

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's Premier League game against Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday (3pm kick-off GMT)
Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford welcome Wolverhampton Wanderers to Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday (3pm kick-off) for their final Premier League fixture before the October international break. The Bees drew 1-1 with West Ham United last time out, while Wolves lost 2-1 to Liverpool.

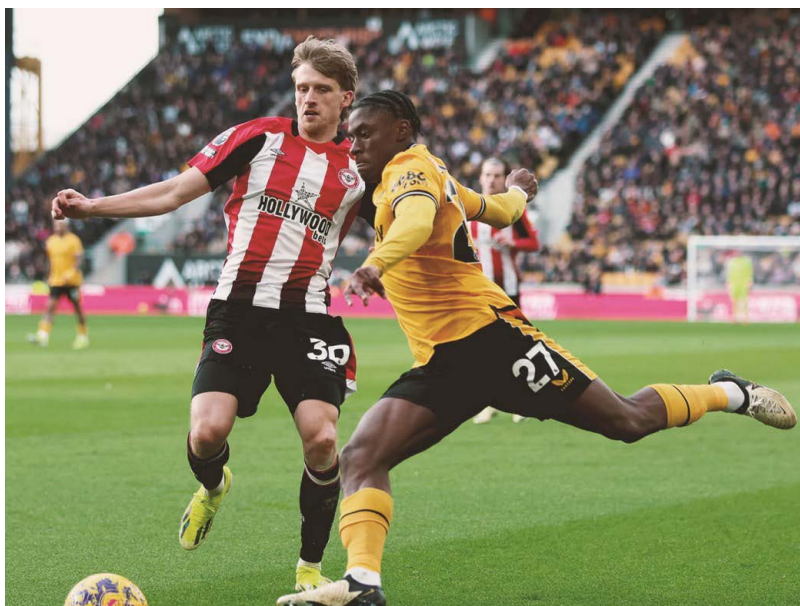
Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of the game.

Pre-match Analysis

Playmaker Stats: Home comforts key for Brentford

Brentford take on Wolves at Gtech Community Stadium this weekend looking to preserve their unbeaten start to life at home in the 2024/25 Premier League campaign.

The Bees have had a very tough fixture list to begin the campaign with trips to Manchester City, Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool in the opening set of six matches, but they have competed in all three, scoring opening-minute goals to take the lead at both City and Spurs, whilst taking advantage of being at home to collect seven points from their other three games.



Collecting points and getting them on the board in all of your 'other games' is essential when starting with such a tough run of fixtures on the road and that is exactly what Thomas Frank's side have done thus far.

The Bees have, like last season, slightly underperformed their expected goals so far this season by 0.52 across the six matches but that will actually give them a belief and confidence that, even whilst still playing well and collecting points, the best is yet to come.

One thing that will concern Frank would be the fact they have conceded nine goals when their expected goals against has been much higher at 12.72. However, with such a small sample size this early into the season and given the standard of the opposition, this is a reasonable number and the performances of Mark Flekken must be praised.

In contrast, Wolverhampton Wanderers have conceded the most goals in the Premier League so far this season with 16 let in and just 11.4 as their expected goals – and they, too, have had a tough start in terms of who they have faced.

This game could actually go against the tide in being quite a low-scoring affair. However, with the form of Bryan Mbeumo, [now Brentford's most productive Premier League player ever in terms of direct goal involvements](#), the home advantage and general improvement of the Bees' performances on last season, there is good reason to believe the west Londoners will head into the October international

break feeling very pleased with their work.

Scout Report

Dan Long, Sky Sports: Wolves in need of points after challenging start to the season

Wolves' plans for the season were thrown into disarray in August 2023 when, just six days before the Premier League curtain-raiser at Manchester United, Julen Lopetegui left.

Apparent disagreements off the pitch had proved too much to contend with for both parties and the Spaniard left Molineux by mutual consent.

With little time to reflect after his own sudden exit at Bournemouth, Gary O'Neil replaced the former Real Madrid and Spain manager, having clearly impressed the board with his firefighting job at Vitality Stadium, which had seen the Cherries flirt with relegation in a season where they had been beaten 9-0 in the opening month, yet ultimately finish five points above the drop zone.

The short turnaround period and the big money sales of Rúben Neves and Matheus Nunes made it unfair to judge him too harshly when Wolves lost four of their first five league games.

On the whole, 2023/24 was a successful season. Not quite as gripping as the club's first two back in the top flight under Nuno Espírito Santo, but solid – not least as, for only the second time, they reached the 50-goal mark in a single Premier League season. They reached the quarter-final of the FA Cup for the second time in six seasons, too.

O'Neil was seen to have done such a terrific job at stabilising things that he was handed a new four-year contract, along with his assistant Tim Jenkins, coaches Shaun Derry and Ian Burchnall, head of goalkeeping Neil Cutler and analyst Woody Dewar.

"He works very hard and is very humble," said chair Jeff Shi. *"He might be the humblest manager I have ever worked with and one of the most hard-working coaches I've ever met. His strengths are around his tactics and his chemistry with the players."* It was a most welcome show of faith.

Wolves brought in transfer fees of around £100 million in the summer, most of which came from the big-money sales of Max Kilman to West Ham and Pedro Neto to Chelsea, and made a healthy £40 million profit after making signings of their own.

That is about as positive as it has got for them so far this term, though.

O'Neil's side lost 2-0 at Arsenal on the opening weekend and it was 2-2 at half-time when they faced Chelsea in their first home league game the following week. After a second-half collapse – which facilitated a 14-minute hat-trick for Noni Madueke – they eventually lost 6-2.

"I didn't see the second half coming," said O'Neil. *"We know how brutal the Premier League can be if you drop your guard slightly. It's a big week for myself, the players and the football club to get as much right in the next week as we can."*

In fairness, they did – a win over Burnley in the Carabao Cup second round preceded a 1-1 draw with Nottingham Forest and their first point of the season. But they haven't won since. Four defeats later and they are out of the cup and bottom of the Premier League table.

Wolves' Expected Points total is 5.13, 4.13 more than their actual points total of one – and though

their Expected Goals Against total is 11.4, they actually have the leakiest defence in the league, having shipped 16 goals in six games.

Factoring in the end of last season, Wolves have lost 11 of their last 15 league games and picked up six of the 45 points on offer in those games.

O'Neil has done it before, but he'll need to work his magic quickly to get both himself and the club out of their current predicament.

In the Dugout

Gary O'Neil

Gary O'Neil is a familiar face for the majority of English football fans, having played in either the Premier League or the Championship for the entirety of his 19-year career.

The former England Under-21 international played more than 500 games for the likes of Portsmouth, West Ham United and Norwich City, and won promotion from the second tier a remarkable four times.

He only retired from playing the game five years ago, having finished at Bolton Wanderers in May 2019 - after winning their Player of the Year award - and then been unable to find a club to prolong his career with after sustaining an Achilles injury.

O'Neil's coaching career began just over a year later in August 2020, when he worked as the assistant Barry Lewtas with Liverpool U23s and, six months later, he was drafted in as first-team coach at Bournemouth, after Jonathan Woodgate's appointment.

Woodgate departed Vitality Stadium that summer, but O'Neil stayed on to work under former West Ham team-mate Scott Parker and, when Parker left shortly after promotion back to the Premier League at the start of the 2022/23 campaign, he was appointed as head coach last November after three months as caretaker.

The 40-year-old kept the Cherries in the top flight for another season, securing a 15th-place finish, five points above the relegation zone, but was sacked in June 2023 in favour of Andoni Iraola.

O'Neil was out of work for less than two months, though, as Wolves appointed him last August, shortly after the shock departure of Julen Lopetegui from Molineux.

Team news

Frank confirms duo are available for Wolves clash

Brentford head coach Thomas Frank has confirmed that both Kevin Schade and Christian Nørgaard will be available for Saturday's game against Wolves.

Schade was taken off during last weekend's draw with West Ham, while Nørgaard has missed the Bees' last two games.

Frank stated: *"Kevin Schade is ready, I expected that, it was cramp."*

"Christian Nørgaard is also available, which is a positive... everyone who knows me and knows his quality will also know that, if he is fit and available to start, he will probably start."



England's Top 10 Council Tax Hotspots Revealed

Living comfortably always comes at a price – especially when it comes to council tax.

A new study by specialist tax consultants at [Tax Advisor](#) has revealed England's priciest council tax areas. Using historical council tax data from gov.uk, the study determined the areas of England where high property values and the demand for top-tier services contribute to steeper bills.

Elmbridge has the highest council tax rate in England, with an average of **£2,646 per dwelling**. Elmbridge's high council tax rates are driven by its affluent status, expensive properties, and the need to fund extensive local services and amenities in line with the area's high standard of living. The area is currently focused on several key initiatives such as revitalising town centres and improving recycling services.

Surrey Heath has the second-highest council tax rate in England, with an average of **£2,501 per dwelling**. Surrey Heath Council has prioritised enhanced flood prevention measures and improving waste collection, with the aim of protecting homes and improving local services. These infrastructure initiatives contribute to the elevated tax rate in the area.

Waverley places third, with an average council tax rate of **£2,488 per dwelling**. The area's wealthy population and costly housing contribute to the high council tax rate. The council is currently investing heavily in local road infrastructure and sustainable housing development projects, all of which require significant funding.

Ranking fourth is **Mole Valley**, with an average council tax rate of **£2,482 per dwelling**. New environmental initiatives, including plans to enhance green spaces and biodiversity, as well as a commitment to upgrade local leisure facilities, contribute to the high rate of council tax.

Tandridge occupies fifth position, with an average council tax rate of **£2,480 per dwelling**. Tandridge Council is focused on many long-term projects that require significant funding, including the development of affordable housing schemes and modernising waste collection systems

Richmond-upon-Thames places sixth, with an average council tax rate of **£2,404 per dwelling**. As a prosperous London borough, the tax reflects high property values and the cost of providing a wide array of services and maintaining high standards for public infrastructure. These public realm improvements include upgrading high streets with new public spaces and enhancing the cycling infrastructure.

Rank	Authority	Average Council Tax per dwelling 2024 to 2025 (GBP)
1	Elmbridge	2,646
2	Surrey Heath	2,501
3	Waverley	2,488
4	Mole Valley	2,482
5	Tandridge	2,480
6	Richmond-upon-Thames	2,404
7	Wokingham Unitary Authority	2,396
8	Rutland Unitary Authority	2,395
9	Epsom & Ewell	2,394
10	Reigate & Banstead	2,379

Wokingham Unitary Authority ranks seventh, with an average council tax rate of **£2,396 per dwelling**. The council is currently prioritising investment in education with new school facilities, as well as expanding social care services for its growing elderly population. These critical investments are key drivers behind the area's elevated tax levels.

In eighth place is **Rutland Unitary Authority**, with an average council tax rate of **£2,395 per dwelling**. Being primarily rural, Rutland's high council tax rate reflects the costs of providing services over a wide area and the high property values typical

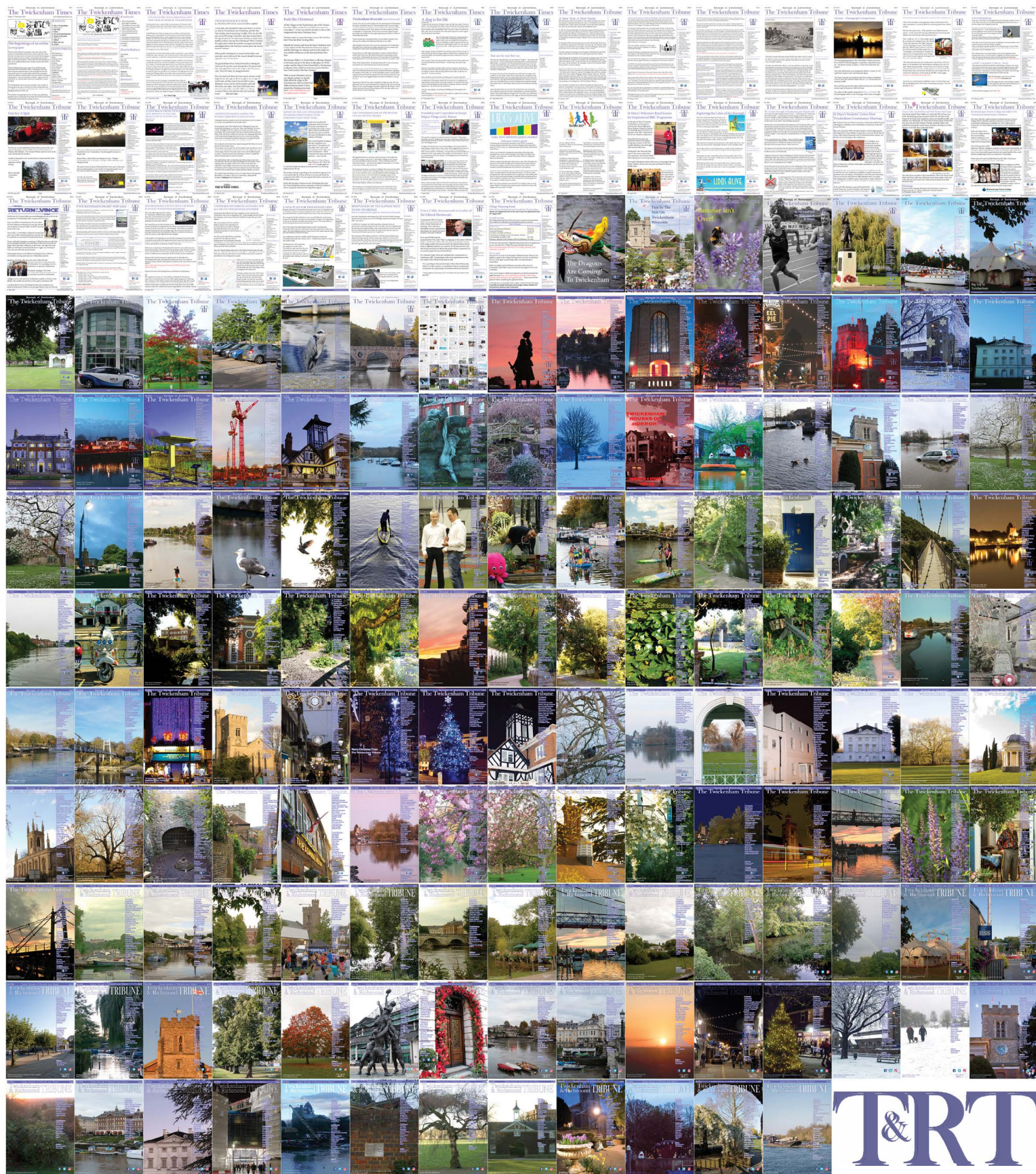
of the region. The council is directing funds toward enhancing rural transport links and improving the area's digital infrastructure.

Epsom & Ewell ranks ninth, with an average council tax rate of **£2,394 per dwelling**. This London borough's affluent status and high property values contribute to this elevated tax rate. Current priority initiatives include town centre regeneration projects and improved flood resilience.

Reigate & Banstead rounds out the top ten, with an average council tax rate of **£2,379 per dwelling**. Environmental projects such as expanding tree planting and improving waste recycling programs are the current focus of the local borough council. These projects, aimed at making the area greener, require considerable investment, which is reflected in the high rate of council tax.

Aatif Malik, Director of [Tax Advisor](#), commented on the findings:
“These findings highlight a clear trend: areas with higher council tax rates are predominantly affluent, with a strong correlation between property values and the cost of local services. In regions like Elmbridge, Surrey Heath, and Waverley, the elevated rates reflect the substantial investment required to maintain public services, infrastructure, and amenities that align with the expectations of their affluent populations. “This study underscores the financial pressures on councils to balance service provision with rising costs in wealthier areas, where property values drive the tax base higher.”

413 editions of the **Twickenham & Richmond Tribune** online - Lots to read: News, Reviews, History, Sports and On-going Sagas in the Borough of Richmond upon Thames



Half Page

Quarter Page
Landscape

Quarter Page Portrait

Eighth Page

Eighth Page
Landscape

Example advert sizes shown above

Thousands read The Twickenham & Richmond Tribune

If you are reading this you could be advertising your business with
The Twickenham & Richmond Tribune. Community rates are
available

Contact: advertise@TwickenhamTribune.com

View ad details at www.TwickenhamTribune.com/advertise

Contact

contact@TwickenhamTribune.com
letters@TwickenhamTribune.com
advertise@TwickenhamTribune.com



Published by:

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune (in association with World InfoZone Limited)

Registered in England & Wales

Reg No 10549345

The Twickenham Tribune is registered with the ICO under the Data Protection Act, Reg No ZA224725

©Twickenham & Richmond Tribune. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used or reproduced without the permission of Twickenham & Richmond Tribune. While we take reasonable efforts, this online newspaper cannot be held responsible for the accuracy or reliability of information. The views and opinions in these pages do not necessarily represent those of The Twickenham & Richmond Tribune.

[Terms & Conditions](#)